



THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE GRANGE

April 30, 2008

Steve Troxler, Commissioner
NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
1001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Commissioner Troxler:

We recently learned that the Draft Report of the Program Evaluation Division of the NC General Assembly recommends that the agricultural research stations be consolidated under the management of one entity, which would be NC State University. In addition, the study also recommends that seven of the research stations should be closed and sold, along with several other selected parcels of property. We have no way of knowing the recommendations that may be included in the final report, but the draft report gives us reason to be concerned.

The following is quoted from the NC State Grange Legislative Policy Manual. "The agribusiness industry is the number one industry in the state and is dependent on applied research for improved efficiency, education, and innovation that is relative to the particular growing conditions that are significantly diverse from one region to another. The North Carolina State Grange firmly opposes any effort to disrupt this current relationship, which could lead to a reduction in the agricultural research activities that take place in the state. The need for new innovations in agriculture continues to be important and research is the key to the development of these resources."

If the final report of the Program Evaluation Division includes the same recommendations as the draft, the NC State Grange will oppose efforts to transfer complete control of the research stations to NC State University. In addition, we will oppose the disposal of research stations, which could lead to a weakened agricultural research program in the state. This is a critical time for agriculture, and it is extremely important that this industry is supported by quality research efforts.

Both NC State University and the NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services are vital entities in the state. However, we believe that agricultural producers and agribusiness will best be served under the current arrangement that exists with the research stations.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Gentry
President

JWG/jat